

# Jefferson Elementary

Responsible Citizens ~ Lifelong Learners

Jefferson Community,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well as we come to the end of a most extraordinary year. I thank you for the support you have given to Jefferson during this time. Teachers have worked incredibly hard to provide school and home learning opportunities to ensure that our students, your children, have continued to make progress.

End-of year i-Ready Diagnostic data indicates Jefferson students have demonstrated an approximate 13% increase in students on, or above, level for both Reading and Math since September! Please continue to read with your child and practice basic math facts at home during the summer months.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this unique school year a success. On behalf of the entire Thomas Jefferson staff, have a safe and happy summer.

We look forward to next year!

Sincerely,



Vanessa Rejrat  
Principal



## Jefferson Vision

We at Jefferson, are committed to meeting and exceeding state and national academic standards. Additionally, we will encourage our students to strive to become kind, caring, compassionate, and productive members of society.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Mrs. Rejrat - Principal  
**315-792-2163**

Mrs. Rightmier-Secretary  
**315-792-2163**

Security  
**315-368-6712**

Nurse  
**315-368-6702**

**Tech. Support**  
**315-368-6997 ext. 9**

School Fax Number  
**315-732-5902**

Main Office Hours  
**8:30 – 3:30**



# Kindergarten

We are so proud of how our kindergarteners have adjusted so well with going from fully remote, to hybrid, to coming fully in person (or staying remote) learning styles. In ELA, we have learned all of our letters and the sounds that they make. We are continuing to work on reading and writing 3-4 letter words. We are continuing to work on our list of 36 high frequency words. We have also been writing sentences using our high frequency words. In math, we are working on adding and subtracting to 10. We are currently working on composing and decomposing numbers 11-20.

Our kindergarten team would like to thank all of our parents for their continued support. We truly could not have had a successful year without you!



# 1st Grade

There is still so much to learn in first grade. As we enter our final months of the school year, the first graders have been learning how to tell time on a digital and analog clock. They have also been learning how to count money. To practice these skills at home with your child, have them count up spare change and find the value, as well as, have them tell you the time. To build reading skills, continue to have them practice their high frequency words every day. Reading is very important. Have your child read daily, especially over the summer.



# 2nd Grade

The second grade students have been reading about how people can make a difference. We read many stories about how to be a good citizen, cooperation, the importance of following rules and how we can protect our Earth. In Math, we have been learning about money. We love singing our coin songs to help us remember the value of each coin! The second grade classes also had the opportunity to attend a Virtual Museum tour. We were able to see Munson Williams on Zoom and discussed the nouns, verbs, and adjectives we saw in paintings and sculptures.



## 3rd Grade

The third graders were also fortunate enough to go on a virtual fieldtrip to the Munson Williams Proctor Art Museum in Utica! Our two wonderful docents led us through the museum. We looked at many different paintings, sculptures and some decorative art. We played a virtual game of BINGO, where we were searching for nouns, verbs and adjectives that we noticed in the artwork. Some of our favorite parts of the trip were looking at the beautiful art, playing BINGO and getting to learn more about this terrific landmark in our own community. This virtual field trip was a wonderful experience for the third graders!

This is one of the marvelous paintings that we saw on our field trip.



Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)  
Sunset, 1856



## 4th Grade

How do you get better at anything you do? You practice! Just like sports or other activities, the key to success in school is practice, practice, practice.

In both reading and math, we have been working on our spiral review of all concepts that were covered during the year.

In science, the students are learning to consider, analyze, interpret, and evaluate instead of just recalling simple facts. They are also practicing by answering multiple-choice and open-ended questions they will see on the upcoming New York State Test in Science for Grade 4.

Thank you for supporting academic growth and achievement at home with your child by practicing multiplication facts (0-12) and encouraging independent reading time!

# 5th Grade

Reading: Students have been reading trade books to further develop their skills and knowledge of the following reading skills: determining the meaning of unknown words, comparing characters, plot and theme identification, drawing conclusions, and making inferences.

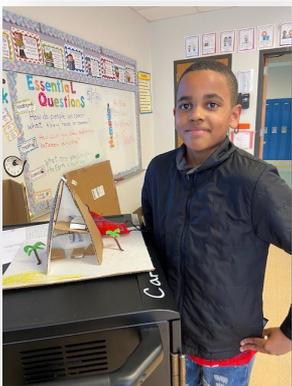
Math: We have been working on our volume module. Students have been solving real-world problems involving volume. At this time, students will use the formula for volume and review multiplication strategies. Then, we will be working on drawing, analysis, and classification of two dimensional shapes.

We encourage our 5th grade students to remain focused and engage in learning. We encourage all learners to participate each day.

# 6th Grade

Wow! Where did this year go? We have been very busy getting ready for our NY State Assessments for Math and ELA and we will soon be getting ready for our final exams for the school year.

We have been studying Ancient Egypt in Social Studies and are currently presenting our Pyramid Projects in our classrooms. Many of them are really amazing. Sixth graders, you rocked it! With June fast approaching, we will be preparing for our final goodbyes from Jefferson Elementary as we graduate and move on to Middle School. Remember, you can be anything you choose in life, wherever you go, go with all your heart! You will be missed and we want to wish you all great success in the 2021-2022 school year, and all your years ahead in school.



## The Morning Crew



Every morning the above students, Hamad, Jaida, Jordan and Sophia share the morning announcements live on Zoom. Every classroom teacher connects to the morning announcement zoom link so all students can see and hear the announcements.

Each morning the students say the Pledge of Allegiance then announce the weather, lunch for the day, quote of the day, joke of the day, did you know fun fact and reminders.

There is now a "Joke Box" at security for anyone that would like to contribute a joke and the kids will read the joke and give the student credit for the joke on air.

If you would like to see the morning announcements, they are taped every morning, then put on our webpage for remote students, parents/guardians to view each day.

## Star Wars Day

Ms. Czepiel's class had fun celebrating Star Wars Day! Students wore Star Wars outfits and even had Star Wars masks. They read Star Wars stories and answered comprehension questions. The students completed math worksheets with all the characters. Students learned about self-control and using "the four" strategy. They even created a Chewbacca geometry project involving the Star Wars theme. The students had a fantastic day learning in a galaxy far, far, away!

May the force be with you!



# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

May 2021



## SHORT NOTES

### Teacher appreciation

This year has been tough for teachers and students alike. Suggest that your youngster end it on a nice note by making a short appreciation video for her teacher. Film your child saying thanks for something specific (“Thank you for teaching us fun word games”) and demonstrating something she learned, like how to make a baking soda-and-vinegar “volcano.”

### Time for poetry

Poetry offers short bursts of reading practice and can help your youngster develop a love of language. Check out a few volumes of children’s poetry from the library this summer. Keep the books in the car, on the coffee table, and anywhere else he could pick them up to read a few verses.

### Checkup reminder

Now is a good time to schedule your child’s back-to-school checkup—especially if she missed this year’s exam due to the pandemic. Her doctor will do important vision and hearing screenings and catch her up on any vaccinations she needs to stay healthy.

### Worth quoting

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.”  
Albert Schweitzer

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What do you call a snowman in May?

**A:** A puddle!

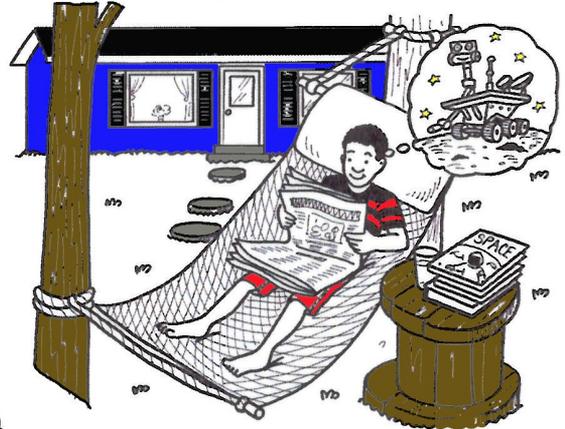


Jefferson Elementary

Vanessa Rejrat, Principal

## Summer brain workouts

Keeping your youngster’s brain active during the summer months helps him remember what he learned in school—and keeps the learning going. That’s especially important this year due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Make summertime fun and educational with these strategies.



### Follow the news

Give your youngster a reason to read and write all summer by having him follow news about a topic that interests him. If he is fascinated by outer space, he might read articles about Mars exploration and space tourism. If he loves animals, he could find news about babies born at the zoo. He can write weekly “news briefs” to summarize major stories and read them aloud to you.

### Play car games

Use time spent in the car to play math games. Call out a target number (say, 11), and race to find a sign with numbers that add up to 11. Your child

might choose a sign for Route 317, because  $3 + 1 + 7 = 11$ . Or work together to find a pattern of odd and even numbers (65 mph on a speed limit sign, \$108 on a hotel billboard). How long can you keep the pattern going?

### Learn together

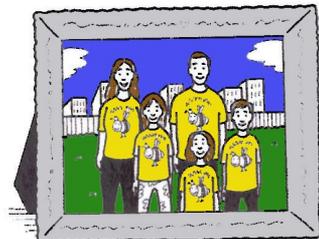
It’s easier to keep your child learning if you join him. Aim to learn something new together each week, perhaps how to build model cars, play different versions of solitaire or dominos, make your own candles, or write simple computer programs.♥

## Family spirit week

Your child has likely celebrated spirit week at school—why not hold a spirit week at home? It will build her sense of family pride and belonging. Try these ideas.

● **Choose a family mascot.** Is your family busy as a bee? Brave as a lion? Have your youngster draw your mascot and write a motto. (“We are the Busy Bees. We get things done!”)

● **Plan special days.** On Baseball Day, each person can wear her favorite team’s colors while everyone plays a friendly backyard ball game. On Heritage Day, eat foods from countries your ancestors are from. *Idea:* Ask other relatives to participate. Swap photos or hold video chats to see each other’s spirit week adventures.♥



# Ways to show respect

Respect means caring how your words and actions affect others. Use these tips to guide your child to be respectful of:

**Others.** Explore the saying, “Treat people how you want to be treated.” Let your youngster draw or list different ways people have treated her respectfully. *Examples:* Her brother asked permission before borrowing her crayons. Her cousin put away his video game to spend time with her. Then, have her look for opportunities to show respect to others.



**Property.** Ask your child to make “care labels” with instructions for taking care of belongings. She might choose a basket to hold library books and make a sticky note label that reads “Handle gently. Return by the due date.”

**Authority.** Talk with your youngster about why we follow rules and laws (to stay safe and be fair). Then, take turns naming a rule or law and a result of ignoring it. For instance, if everyone ignored the “No talking in class” rule, no one would be able to hear the teacher and learn.♥



## Making decisions

**Q:** Now that my daughter is older, she gets angry when I try to help her make decisions. How can I guide her and still keep the peace?

**A:** It’s tempting as a parent to speak up when you think your child is making a poor choice. But experiencing consequences is how kids learn to make better decisions. If your daughter’s choices won’t cause harm, let her make some mistakes.



Rather than volunteering advice, ask questions. If she’s thinking of breaking a promise to a friend, you might ask, “How do you think your friend will feel?”

Finally, if her choice turns out badly, avoid saying, “I told you so.” Instead, help her brainstorm ways to do better in the future. If her friend gets mad at her for breaking her promise, you might say, “What would you do differently next time?”♥



## My nature center

My son Will looks forward to springtime visits to our local nature center. This year, the indoor exhibits are closed, so I suggested that he create his own nature center at home.

Will loved the idea. He made rubbings of bark from trees, collected flowers and leaves from the ground, and drew pictures of plants and animals he spotted. Together, we checked out field guides from the library to identify his findings. He used what he learned to make an informational “plaque” for each item, just like in the real nature center.

Then Will set up his exhibits in a corner of the family room. He added books about nature as well as a few “wild” stuffed animals, like a squirrel and a cardinal. When he was satisfied with his nature center, he gave our family a tour.

Will continues to add new discoveries—and he’s looking forward to showing relatives and friends around his nature center via video chat.♥



## Holiday history

Use summer holidays as a jumping-off point to explore history with your youngster.

### Memorial Day

Go online together and learn about national war memorials. *Examples:* the National World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the National Memorial Arch. Some even have virtual tours. Then invite your child to make models of the memorials using play dough or materials from the recycling bin.

### Independence Day

Fun fact: Since 1776, there have been 27 different versions of the U.S. flag. Have your youngster research them in library books. He can draw each flag on the plain side of an index card. On the lined side, he could write the date the flag was introduced and other facts about it. Let him punch holes in the cards and thread them on a piece of yarn to display them in order by date.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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# Counselor's Corner

## How Outdoor Play Builds Social and Emotional Skills in Children

Your child's mind is rapidly developing every minute.

It is a complex interplay of emotions, interpretation of the senses and movement experiences, creating memories, planning, and learning about the world around them.

The mind enables your children to be aware of the world around them and to consciously think and make decisions.

It is both complex and fascinating at the same time.

In order to keep things simple, we are going to focus on two primary functions of the mind: social-emotional skills and cognitive skills.

These skills are enhanced through outdoor play experiences.

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS**

Waiting your turn. Following the rules. Dealing with feelings of frustration and anger in a healthy way. Sharing your toys. Making new friends. All of these skills describe components of healthy social-emotional development. Young children develop their social-emotional skills through practice and small steps over time.

You can support your child's social-emotional skills by simply holding him, touching him, and speaking to him. Giving him loving attention while letting him play, explore, and follow his interests. He will develop new skills when you give him just enough help so that he can be successful, without getting overly frustrated. Occupational therapists call this the "just right" challenge. For instance, if your child is trying to climb up a single step onto the next level of flooring — step back and let him, but be there to spot him. Maybe he only needs a little nudge in order to successfully make it to the next level, but did it mostly by himself. Next time he tries, he is likely to have the confidence needed to advance up the step independently. This teaches him that hard work and persistence is often followed by success.

If your children have trouble with social-emotional skills, they may have difficulties playing with other children. They may get easily frustrated and angry and have trouble controlling their rage. They often don't empathize with the needs of other children. They may have trouble sharing, listening to others, taking turns, and playing by the rules even as they get older and these skills should be in place. It is important that we start early with children. Teach them what is right and wrong. Listen to them and allow independence whenever possible — especially in an outdoor setting.

## **Playing independently outdoors with friends further challenges and enhances children's social-emotional skills.**

The natural setting creates a calm, sensory rich (but not sensory overloaded) environment where kids can play energetically without some of the frustrations, noise, and other stressors that present themselves at indoor play facilities or on school grounds. In nature, away from adults and large groups of peers, children find peace and calm. They have opportunities to work out issues one-on-one or in small groups of children. There are no colorful lights blinking, noisy interruptions, or adults constantly checking in on them. Time expands as they dive into deep play. Their opportunities for advanced social interactions and problem solving are endless.

## **COGNITIVE SKILLS**

Cognitive skills also develop through practice and opportunity over time. They involve abilities such as paying attention, memory, and thinking. These crucial skills utilize the processing of sensory information to form new memories, evaluate, analyze, make comparisons, and learn cause and effect. Some cognitive skills are genetic; however, most cognitive skills are learned through real life situations. In other words, learning and thinking skills can be improved through enriching cognitive experiences.

To foster learning, be mindful of what interests your child has and allow her ample time to explore the subject. For example, if your child is thoroughly excited by the shark exhibit at the local children's museum and wants to spend a good portion of her time here, let her, even if you are bored and would rather see the jellyfish, which is meaningful to you but perhaps not to your child. Sometimes as adults, we feel like we know the best activity to help our children learn something new. However, if we simply step back and follow the child — they will often lead us to what is most interesting and meaningful to them.

**When children are deprived of child-led play experiences, they may struggle with higher-level thinking skills such as coming up with their own ideas, problem-solving, and other forms of creative expression.**

## **IN A NUTSHELL**

Adults should step back a little, and allow children the gift of time and space. It is only when we constantly say, "no" that we start to see problems in development. We may say, "no climbing," "no riding your bike to Henry's house," "no running," "there is no time for that," "don't touch that," and "get down from there."

We think we know what is best for our children. We are just trying to protect them. However, by constantly rushing children, restricting their movement, and diminishing their time to play, we are causing more harm than good. ~Angela Hanscom

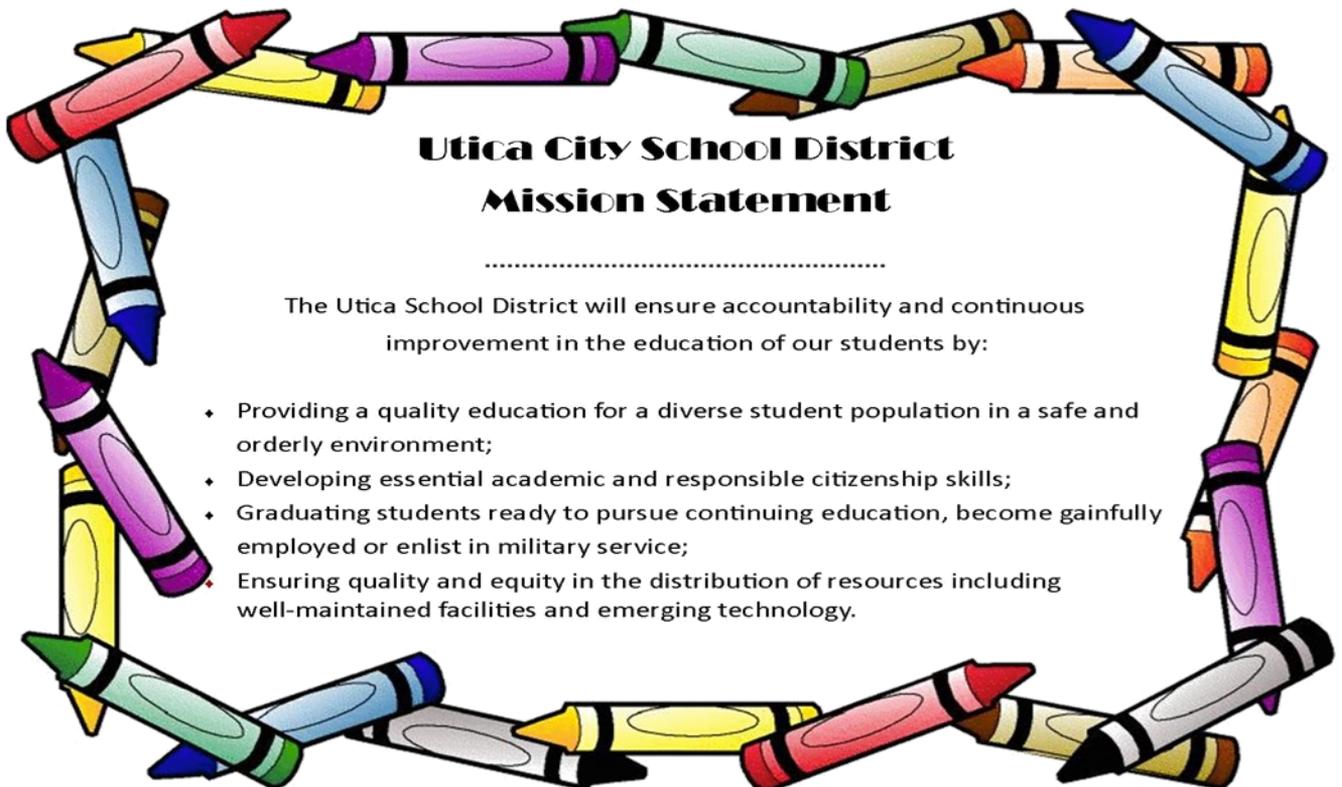


*Thank You*

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Mr. Steven A. Falchi



**Utica City School District**  
**Mission Statement**

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The Utica School District will ensure accountability and continuous improvement in the education of our students by:

- ♦ Providing a quality education for a diverse student population in a safe and orderly environment;
- ♦ Developing essential academic and responsible citizenship skills;
- ♦ Graduating students ready to pursue continuing education, become gainfully employed or enlist in military service;
- ♦ Ensuring quality and equity in the distribution of resources including well-maintained facilities and emerging technology.